

Gutschmidt converted an old International dump truck into a dump trailer.



Dump Truck Repurposed Into Dump Trailer

A broken-down International dump truck has started a new life as a dump trailer. With a suspected broken crankshaft and a motor that was shot, it was ready for salvage.

"I took the cab and motor off and verified the broken crankshaft," says Roger Gutschmidt. "There was nothing of value in the cab, but I saved the hood and the radio and gave the doors to a friend who said he could use them."

With the truck stripped down, Gutschmidt noted that it had a double-walled frame.

"I'd never seen one before, but knew they were designed for heavy loads," he says. "I decided to turn it into a dump trailer that I could hitch to a tractor and use around the farm."

He started by cutting off the front end and suspension. Gutschmidt found that bending the remaining frame to make a hitch was easier than expected. He made pie-shaped cuts in the frame rails at the points where he wanted them to bend.

"I put a chain around each rail and used a load binder with a pipe to pull them together," says Gutschmidt. "When I got the two within 18 in. of each other, I put a 1/2-in. ready rod through two holes in the frame rails so they wouldn't spring back when I reset the load binder."

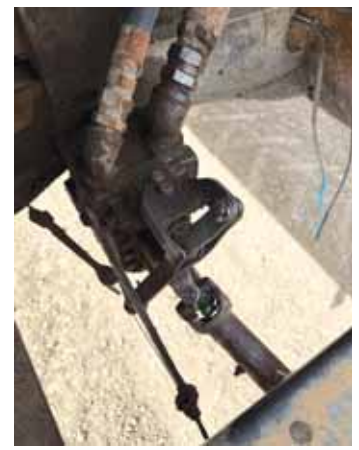
He stopped bending the rails when they were 6 in. apart, leaving a gap for the PTO shaft that powered the hydraulic pump. Gutschmidt was surprised to find there was no reservoir.

"I could've used the tractor hydraulics for the hoist, but that might have contaminated it with old oil in the ram," says Gutschmidt. "Plus, the old hydraulic ram seals might not have the strength to handle the tractor hydraulics."

Gutschmidt knew the pump didn't take that much power; in fact, he could turn it with an electric drill. When he first connected the shaft to his tractor, the pump didn't work.

"I discovered the pump had two stub shafts sticking out," says Gutschmidt. "One turned clockwise and the other counterclockwise, so I was able to match the tractor's PTO."

The frame rails were about 30 in. high, compared with the 18-in. tractor drawbar. To keep the trailer level, Gutschmidt lowered the hitch from the frame rails by using 4 by 6-in., 1/2-in. wall rectangular tubing. This lowered the hitch height and also served as a spacer between the frame rails. He used 1/2-in. steel plate to gusset the top of the hitch and, to make a clevis hitch, welded it under the rectangular tubing. He also welded a 1/4-in. steel plate across the end of the frame rails,



PTO-powered pump on hydraulic ram.

with a hole for the PTO shaft.

"I mounted a handle on the top gusset plate to activate the hoist," says Gutschmidt. "Later, I added a cable to the cab."

The cable cost \$100. It was one of the few expenses in the build, aside from welding and cutting supplies.

"I didn't have much money in it, just scrap iron I had sitting around," says Gutschmidt. "I built it to sell and have it listed online for \$3,500."

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Alley Cropping Catching On

Jason Mauck believes alley cropping may lower input costs, boost soil health, and increase profit per acre. He promotes "farming weird," which involves alternating strips of corn with strips or alleys of cover crops. Over the past decade, he's experimented with various practices, including relay cropping, in which he plants soybeans into winter wheat and harvests both crops. While relay cropping is more established, he sees alley cropping offering unique benefits.

"Alley cropping lets me integrate cover crops without fighting the cash crop," says Mauck. "I'm looking at things that will grow over the winter, like clover, and build nitrogen while leaving lanes for planting corn."

Mauck has tested various alley widths, crop mixes and planting systems. This year, he frost-seeded clover in February and plans to plant strips of corn in April. Previously, he planted four 30-in. rows of corn for a 90-in. corn strip, with a 150-in. alley planted to forage sorghum.

In 2025, he planted 60-in. corridors of corn with 100-in. alleys. He's found that anything wider than 60 in. appears to decrease corn yields. Anything narrower reduces the vigor and value of what can be grown in between. He maintains that the alleys between the corn corridors are valuable.

"I want to get soils to the next level by growing more carbon through cover crop root exudates," says Mauck. "We can build the soil by focusing on water-exchangeable carbon. I may lose 10% of yield compared to conventional corn, but reduce inputs to make up the difference."

He highlights increased ear placement on edge rows due to greater light exposure as a way to secure yield. Last fall, he harvested 454 bushels of corn per acre from those corn corridor acres. When including the alleys, the average was 227 bushels per acre.

"The question isn't how to make it on 90% yield, but how to reduce production costs of the corn and create value with the space in between the corn corridors," says Mauck. "The alleys let me straddle the corn corridors instead of driving on them and



Wheat ready for harvest, relay-cropped with soybeans.

plant in narrower rows at increased density. That expedites corn canopy by 15 to 20 days, reducing herbicide needs."

Other benefits include the ability to harvest alleys for forage multiple times during a growing season. With a large hog operation on his farm, the alleys also allow him to apply manure in-season with each forage harvest. If a farm has cattle, he notes that the alleys can be grazed after corn harvest.

Mauck experiments with alley cropping on less than 10 acres. However, he's relay cropping about 400 acres of winter wheat and soybeans. The soybeans will be planted into the green wheat this spring, and when the wheat is harvested, the soybeans will take off.

"The goal is to reduce risks with soybean production and to be able to plant as early as possible, using the wheat to dry out the soil and warm it," says Mauck. "The result is harvesting a cereal crop that you didn't invest much in and add margin to soybean yields with less inputs for weed control."

Mauck frequently posts on social media, especially on Facebook, X and LinkedIn. Learn more about his alley cropping and relay cropping there.

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"We felt the best way to get the system we wanted was to partner up with Donner and build them the way we wanted," says Pieper.

Trailer Holds Four 3,000-Gal. Tanks

Stoneham Equipment Company recently introduced its Quad Tank trailer for mobile liquid storage. Stoneham is a joint venture between Next Level Agriculture Solutions and Donner Manufacturing. The companies are located down the road from each other in the same town.

The trailer can be outfitted with up to four 3,000-gal. tanks. Each cone-bottom tank sits on a removable stand, allowing hoses to lie flat for easy filling and cleaning. The trailer offers left or right-hand plumbing, front and back-fills for increased flexibility, a simplified lift system, and a robust lift valve.

"We introduced the Quad Tank trailer this past summer and completed our first production run in January of this year," says Nick Pieper of Next Level Agriculture Solutions. "We sold out of our first units, and Donner Manufacturing is building more trailers. We add tanks and the plumbing needed."

The product line, which will soon include 1,300 and 1,700-gal. nurse trailers, resulted from frustration experienced by Next Level Agriculture Solutions, a farm services and input supplier of seed, liquid fertilizer and precision technologies.

"We had used storage tank trailers from many different brands in the past," says Pieper. "We felt the best way to get the system we wanted was to partner up with Donner and build them the way we wanted."

Complaints included undersized trailer jacks, insufficient oil capacity for the lift system, and the need for space at the front of the trailers to accommodate the addition of inductors.

Stoneham trailers use heavy-duty tubing frames with upgraded axles and a hydraulic lift. They also feature a solid front jack and a larger front platform.

"We designed stands that are a little higher than competitors offer so the hose can lay flat," says Pieper. "We also developed a handle kit, so the operator doesn't have to get under the trailer to open a tank valve. We offer it as an option."

The tank supports are bolted to the trailer and can be removed, allowing the trailer to be used for other purposes.

"You can buy the trailer without being locked into the four tanks, leaving room for other needs," says Pieper.

The Quad Tank trailer is priced at \$28,200 with a 3-in. fill system. It's also available with a 2-in. fill system. It's equipped with a Honda motor and up to 50 ft. of discharge hose. A double-tank trailer is priced at \$16,900, and a triple-tank trailer is priced at \$21,900.

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